DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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QUOTA QUICKIES AGAIN

ONE OF the most awful experiences that can happen to a cinema-goer these days is to be caught in a cinema waiting for the big film and have to sit through half an hour of a dud second feature.

There are quite a number of small British companies making these films—one shown in the West End the other day didn't have a shot in it under fifty feet in length and every foot of film that had been shot, including camera flashes and dud pans, had been used. Enquiries showed that the total cost of the film was just over £400 for a cut negative of 3,450 ft. The producers' share of the receipts was reckoned to be about £2,000. Another film of this type—a studio production this time—4,000 ft. in length, the subject a detective story, was shot in four days on one set, the set being re-papered and redressed each night. The total cost £1,400. In some ways you can admire the people who make such films when one thinks of the finicky indecision, poor planning and overspending that goes on in a lot of studios, but even so this type of film is damaging the industry and should be stopped.

But for every film of this type produced in Britain, there must be twenty-five produced in America. By the time the dud American second features, and this means about 90 per cent of them, arrive in England, they have paid for themselves three, four, or five times over, and the distributors can afford to give them away to the exhibitors for practically nothing. In Wardour Street to-day you can buy the British distribution rights of a five-reel American second feature for £20.

And so we arrive at the reason for the demand for the very cheapest second features. Films for renters' quota are of course protected by a cost clause which keeps the standard of the production fairly high, but there is no similar control for exhibitors' quota. Quota films are in short supply and the market is flooded with bad American products at "throw away" prices—so small British companies, interested only in the profits, knock reels of junk together which qualify for exhibitors' quota.

Now what is the feeling of British producers, renters and exhibitors? The big producers are quite happy, because the drearier the second feature the less the money it receives and of course the more the big pictures take. As production and renting are so closely tied together, the renters are happy too.

But what about the exhibitors? They know that these films drive audiences to sleep and they would rather not show them, but they say they must in order to make up the quota against all the dud American second features. If you ask them why they have to buy British quota from the gutters they answer "We have to buy in the cheapest market. We're not philanthropists!" You may even ask, "Why show the American second features when no one wants to see them?" but if you do the exhibitor will go white and might possibly have a heart attack, for what you are suggesting is a single feature programme. And although exhibitors know that audiences don't want to see these films, they believe that a single feature programme will keep their "patrons", as they call us, out.

Now how do these British-made junk second features directly harm the industry?

First, production. Decent second features could be an ideal training ground, especially for key technicians such as script writers, directors, cameramen, recordists and editors and, of course, as a try-out ground for actors. (If you are producing a film for a hundred thousand pounds you think twice before giving a promising but untried youngster the job as director, or an unknown actress one of the leading parts. But if one of the big studios, apart from its ordinary production schedule, made, say, five films a year at £15,000 each—£75,000 in all, just the cost of one medium-sized film—they would be making an investment that would be repaid a thousand times over.)

Second, exhibition. Audiences can't be bothered with these films. They cough, talk, go to sleep or walk out, and when you hear some one complaining about British films being bad, it is usually one of these that they are talking about. Which can be summed up as—they give the British production industry a bad name; they discourage people from going to the pictures.

The position to-day is very similar to that in 1938 before the present Quota Act was passed. Then the American distributors were commissioning quota quickies which counted for renters' *and* exhibitors' quota. There was no part of the act which controlled the price or quality of such films, and they very nearly finished the production industry off. It was only the introduction of the cost clause for *renters'* quota in the new Quota Act that saved it. Immediately a renter had to prove to the Board of Trade that £7,500 or £15,000 had been spent on labour, the quality of the films improved immediately. To-day there is no cost clause for *exhibitors'* quota. Judging by past experience it is about time that it was introduced; or, even better, in the next revision of the Quota Act, let us have a clause banning the double-feature programme.

THE B.F.I. PROPOSES—

THE GOVERNORS of the British Film Institute have published their proposals for the organisation and activities of a Visual Education Committee. The Ministry of Education asked them for proposals on October 31st, 1944, and in fact received them by the end of the year. Their publication now in a leaflet* (dated August, 1945) which has been widely circulated comes as something of a surprise. We had thought that they had been discreetly pigeonholed. We believe that publication has also come as a surprise to the Ministry of Education which, as we go to press, has not felt itself compelled to acknowledge the proposals publicly or to take any action on them.

With the general line of the proposals we and, we believe, most people with knowledge of the situation would agree. Obviously there must be a central Committee to direct the development of visual aids in education. Everyone knows that educational film production will have to be financed out of the public funds. As the number of schools using visual aids increases it will be necessary to decentralise distribution, and it will be desirable to attach to the organisations established for this purpose officers with special knowledge and experience of visual aids. But all this organisation the Governors propose should be established within the existing structure of the British Film Institute. The whole policy, administration and activity of the Visual Education Committee would be subject to the control of the Governors of the British Film Institute. The Governors have nominated the organisations that should be entitled to representation on the Committee, and the choice of individuals co-opted so as to form one-third of the Committee would be subject to their approval. The Governors would also be the final judges of which films should be subsidised. The proposed additional staff in London and in the provinces would be appointed by the Governors. To carry out their proposals the Governors would be given £100,000 a year, either by direct grant from the Ministry of Education or by contributions ranking for grant-aid from the L.E.A's.

The Institute's record over the twelve years since it was established makes it impossible, in our view, for the Ministry to accept this proposal. Who else but the Institute would propose for an urgent job a Committee of 78 people with an elaborate system of Sub-Committees? Who else but the Institute would make proposals for subsidising film production and organising film distribution without making any proposals about the production and installation of projectors on which to show the films? What led the Governors to decide on a production programme of 40 reels of films a year at a flat rate of £1,000 a reel? Did the Governors have no misgivings about the wisdom or propriety of making themselves and the Visual Education Committee responsible both for the administration of subsidies to companies making educational films and for organising the appraisal of the films when they are made?

Of the 78 members, 52 would be representatives of organisations. Co-option of individuals from the Subject Associations (Science Masters, Historical, Geographical, etc.), or for their knowledge of visual education, to form one-third only of the Committee would ensure that the members with knowledge were kept in the minority. The list of bodies to nominate representatives includes about everyone you can think of. But what practical help do the Governors expect to get for their Committee from the representatives of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, the Kinematograph Renters' Society, the Federation of British Industries, the National Confederation of Employers or, if it comes to that, the T.U.C.? The government education departments and local education authorities between them have 15 representatives, balanced by 20 from the Teachers' Organisations. Here there are many claimants so most of them (Headmasters' Association, Headmistresses' Association, Assistant Masters, Assistant Mistresses and so on) get only one apiece. The Teachers in Training Colleges and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions are favoured with two each. Why? The N.U.T. gets 6. Why? Among 8 representatives of the Film Producing interests, the Short Film Producers' Association is allowed 4 (balancing 4 from the feature part of the Trade) "two Instructional and two Documentary". It needs the Institute to draw so precise a distinction between makers of instructional and makers of documentary films.

To do the work the Governors propose a smaller Executive elected with "due regard to the adequate representation of the various constituent groups of the Committee"; and 7 specialised Sub-Committees: (*a*) Physical Education, (*b*) Science, (*c*) Technology and Art, (*d*) Humanities, (*e*) Technical, (*f*) Appraisal, (*g*) Research, the members of which would be experts appointed individually, but whether from the members of the parent Committee (in which there are only 26 people chosen for their expert knowledge) or in addition to them is not clear. The prototype for this kind of Committee is said to be the Central Council for School Broadcasting. But surely it is to be found much nearer home, in the system of Advisory Council, Panels and Committees for this, that and the other which the Institute elaborated twelve years ago. In fact, what is proposed is the same old firm under a new name, but this time with executive powers and considerable sums of public money entrusted to it.

Administratively, the Governors propose a system by which a Sub-Committee draws up proposals, which are then passed up to an Executive, from it to the main Committee, and from it to the Governors who "put forward as soon as possible a series of recommendations of material which is urgently needed to be made"! After this it would appear that the Governors wait for film companies to come and say that they are thinking of making films on such and such subjects in the series of recommendations but cannot afford to do so without a subsidy. The Governors ask the companies to submit "extended treatments" and if "in the opinion of the Institute" they seem promising they arrange "to guarantee a market". How the Governors will arrange this or indeed whether this is what they will do is difficult to discover from the leaflet. For while on page 5 the Governors talk of guaranteeing a market, on page 6 they list under *Annual Subsidies* "40 subjects of one reel a year at £1,000 each: 100 Film Strips at £150 each" and so on. Only the Governors can explain whether this is, as we suspect, an alternative suggestion to guaranteeing a market, details of which they have omitted in editing the proposals for publication. If it is not we should like to know how it is related to guaranteeing a market by, presumably, the sale of prints.

The idea of a guaranteed market was first proposed a year or so ago by Gaumont-British Instructional. Local education authorities were to be asked to undertake to buy copies of films before they went into production so that the production company could judge whether and at what cost it would pay them to make films. Is this what the Governors are proposing—that L.E.A.'s should be committed to buying something they have not seen on the say-so of the Institute? We cannot find any other interpretation. That the Institute should propose a system which would involve L.E.A.'s in blind-purchase and would promote the production of films of the greatest common denominator at the lowest possible price is typical. The Governors, as might be expected, make no reference whatever to the production and distribution of films by Government Departments during the war. Yet there is a body of people, in the Ministry of Information and the Services, highly expert in the assessing of scripts and the ordering of production, whose experience could be applied to the production of educational

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* *Proposals from the British Film Institute to the Ministry of Education for the formation of a Visual Education Committee.*

films for the Ministry of Education. The Institute has no experience of this kind nor will the Governor's proposed Committee provide it.

We are not concerned at this stage to elucidate the obscurities and examine in detail the proposed arrangements for distribution through local and Regional Film Libraries and for Regional Staffs to be attached to the Institute. If we were we should like to know whether by "self-supporting" film libraries the Governors mean libraries that restrict their stock and services to what they can provide from the income they receive from film-hire, and if so whether such libraries will meet the needs of schools. We should like to know, too, why the staff and expenditure proposed for each of the Regions is the same, whereas the areas and the number of schools within them vary greatly and so therefore would the size of each library and the amount of work to be done. Greater London and the four North-Western counties, two of the ten "Regions", cover between them almost two-thirds of the population of England.

But these things can wait until there is an immediate prospect of films being made and projectors being installed in schools. Neither will result from the proposals put forward by the Governors of the British Film Institute. For our part, we have already formulated what we believe to be the proper method of making and distributing educational films, in *The Future of the Educational Film* (D.N.L. Vol. V, No. 48). In brief, since the production of educational films must be financed out of public money the Ministry must assume direct responsibility for production and for maintaining proper relations with the local authorities and the teachers. To advise it the Ministry should set up a small and effective Advisory Council on Visual Aids composed of individuals chosen for their knowledge and reputation, with a permanent staff. For carrying out its plans it should work through Films Division of the Ministry of Information or the Film Office which may take its place and thus avail itself of the experience gained there and in the Services. When the Ministry has put this work in hand and also tackled the problems of projectors for schools it should then turn its attention to the British Film Institute. There will be a need for an independent, authoritative body to examine, appraise, and criticise the work the Ministry is doing and to help local authorities and teachers to make the best use of the films and other visual aids produced by the Ministry. The importance of such a body, having behind it the informed opinion of groups all over the country, cannot be over-estimated. It is what the British Film Institute was established to become, and has failed to become, for reasons which are as well-known to the Institute itself as they are to the Ministry of Education.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Technician or Artist?

THE *Interim Report of the Technical Standards Committee*, published by the Association of Cine-Technicians in August, takes an important step towards combining trade unionism with the qualities of a professional association or a learned society. Inter-departmental lectures are proposed so that one section of the industry can be led to understand the work of another; visits are to be arranged to studios and laboratories; a library of books and films is recommended; most importantly the committee hopes that there will presently be a club with premises of its own and facilities for projection. These proposals are admirable, but we feel that they have not gone far enough. In the first place, no attention seems to have been paid to distribution, though distribution is as much a part of film making as production, and A.C.T. members ought to make themselves familiar with its ramifications. In the second place the committee seems to regard film technicians mainly as craftsmen rather than as artists and creators. Yet, if our film industry is to take its place firmly alongside the other great cultural institutions of our country, the film workers will require more than higher technical standards. They must also put themselves on an equal footing with the leading poets, musicians, architects and painters of the day. It is as important, for example, for film workers to have an opportunity of hearing T. S. Eliot reading his own poetry, as it is for them to visit Denham Studios. The report does not mention electricians, carpenters or plasterers. Yet these are as essential to film making as anyone else. The sooner they are encouraged to feel themselves equals beside the laboratory workers, the production staff and the camera crews, the better.

Post-War Jobs

WE WELCOME one of the most important series of films so far undertaken by the Ministry of Information. The subject of the series is *Post-War Jobs* and the films are obviously assured of a large and interested audience. The object of each film is to report, factually and without bias either way, on a certain job, and to show what the job is, with notes on conditions of work and future prospects. The list of projected titles is a long one and ranges from the building trade, via catering, civil engineering, furniture making and the distributive trades, to office and domestic work. If the Ministry keeps up the high standard set by the first three, *Farm Worker* (reviewed in *D.N.L.* Vol. V, 84th issue, p. 77), *Teaching* and *What's the Next Job?*, they will have done one fine post-war job themselves.

Films for Parents

THREE Ministry of Health films for parents—*Your Children's Teeth* (reviewed in our previous issue), *Your Children's Eyes* and *Your Children's Ears* (both reviewed in this issue) represent the first serious attempt at presenting detailed medical information to lay audiences. Various home encyclopaedias have been doing it for years but their information is often scrappy and more on the lines of Tom Sawyer's cure for warts, than accurate information that would be helpful to a mother with a sick child. These three films have not made the fatal mistake of underestimating their audiences; they deal fully with their subject and the pamphlets which go with them will serve as a reminder in a time of trouble. We congratulate the Ministry of Health and hope they will use these films as a basis for a comprehensive series covering the whole field of child health.

The King's English

THE Ministry of Information records films in Chinese and Malay, Spanish and Brazilian, French and Russian, Swedish and Italian, and many other languages. Yet we understand that never, since the beginning of the war, has a single Afrikaans version of an M.O.I. film been available for non-theatrical use in South Africa. America supplies plenty of such films. If the King's English is good enough for Kensington, it's good enough for the Cape, what?

D.N.L. Reviews

OCCASIONALLY the suggestion is made that film reviews appearing in *D.N.L.* should be signed. The policy of the Editorial Board is that *D.N.L.* should maintain a self-critical attitude towards documentary attainments, no less than a readiness to spot-light its successes. This outlook, fundamental to documentary itself, is reflected in the manner of presentation of the film reviews in the *News Letter*. Commonly a film is reviewed by an individual selected by the Board. By the fact of its being published, unsigned, such a review is endorsed by the Board as being what it considers a valid point of view about that film. Often the review is written by a Board member, in which case clearly it is appropriate that it be unsigned. If a review is signed the implication is that it is an expression of a personal opinion with which the Board does not necessarily wholly associate itself.

THE PARIS SCIENTIFIC FILM CONFERENCE

In 1934, M. Jean Painlevé and Doctor Claoué inaugurated an annual series of scientific film conferences in Paris. The seventh of this series, interrupted by the war, took place on October 12th, 13th and 14th at the Palais de Chaillot. This Congress was arranged by the Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique and was supported by the Association pour la Documentation Photographique et Cinématographique dans les Sciences, an organisation with some ten thousand members in France. British non-theatrical films were an important element in the programmes. Below, John Maddison, who represented The Ministry of Information and the Scientific Film Association at the Congress, gives some impressions of the occasion.

The French cinema, from first impressions, appears to have preserved much of its liveliness and power of improvisation. Conversations and press reports made it clear that its greatest problem remains the lack of studio space and materials. This was underlined by the note of tragedy in prevailing comments on the fire which, a day or two before, had destroyed the larger part of the important Victorine Studios, the only ones on the Mediterranean Coast. Valuable sound recording equipment had been lost but elaborate settings for Duvivier's film *Panique* had escaped. Jean Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu*, banned by the Germans in 1940, had reappeared the week before, and had been withdrawn for lack of commercial success. I did not see it, but everyone agreed that it was an unconventional and intensely personal film, more violent in form than *La Bête Humaine*. Indeed one critic described it as the most violent work seen in the French cinema in fifty years. Among films showing at first-run houses were Bresson's *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, a stylised but tawdry intrigue, in spite of a script by Cocteau, and Carné and Prévert's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, begun under the Occupation, a story of Paris in 1840, and a film to note.

My first contact with Jean Painlevé, my host at the Congress, was through a paragraph in an evening paper announcing that he had been attacked by a vampire! Later in the day, he himself smilingly gave me the facts in his cinema laboratory in the basement of the Arts et Métiers Science Museum. He had just finished a short interest film about a real vampire, which had proved a little difficult to handle. This film *Le Vampire* was shown at the end of the Congress. After opening with a sequence devoted to strange beasts and marine creatures which have given rise to myths and legends, Painlevé uses material from Murnau's silent film *Nos Feratu* to introduce a realistic study of this rare and terrible animal attacking its victim, a South American rodent. The commentary to the film is witty and at times macabre and the accompanying jazz melody is haunting and melancholic. The whole thing is a *jeu d'esprit* in the French manner and would serve as an interesting contrast to a Secrets of Nature film in any Film Society programme.

The son of a former Prime Minister of France, Painlevé is an interesting character. He gave up medical studies for films and one may best describe him as a scientist who has fallen in love with the cinema. During the occupation, he was an active member of the Resistance but took no part in film-making. In 1944, after Paris was liberated, he was appointed Director General of the French Cinema Industry. Earlier this year, he left this post to take over the Institute Cinématographie Scientifique in order to devote himself to experimental cinematography. His interests there include research into stereoscopy with a triple vibrating wire screen, and the development of a standard projector with a cooling system efficient enough to give with safety a fairly brilliant still picture even when using flammable stock. French technicians have perfected a substandard cinecamera operating at 5,000 frames per second, and I watched Painlevé filming with it the dissolution of a glass bottle under the impact of a rifle shot. He projected the negative of it later and this short sequence was very striking.

Painlevé maintains (and it is a contention with which our Scientific Film Association strongly agrees) that scientific methods ought to be used in a more organised way to lead to improvements in cinematography itself. To quote his own words, there should be research "pour le film" as well as "par le film". Apart from the work done by commercial laboratories, he looks forward to the establishment of a State Research Centre investigating such problems as stereoscopy and colour and the improvement of emulsions and lenses, etc. The fact that out of 33 films presented at the Congress, only one came within this category of research appeared lamentable to him. This was a film demonstrating a method for faking backgrounds called *Simplifilm*. It was presented by its inventor, Dufour, with all the enthusiasm of a compatriot of Melies but without the rare sense of décor of that genius. *Simplifilm* uses a metal chamber, containing a special optical system, placed before the camera, and mounted on a stand which rotates with it. Cut-outs from photographs and picture post cards are placed in an aperture in the middle of the chamber, and when shot, these two-dimensional settings blend quite successfully with the players and objects on the set. Models also can be placed in the aperture. The lighting is naturally rather flat, but the device undoubtedly offers interesting new possibilities for inexpensive trick work.

At the six sessions of the Congress, films from France, Great Britain, Canada, America, Italy, the U.S.S.R. and Switzerland were shown. The first films to be presented were two medical subjects by the late Dr. de Martel who committed suicide in the summer of 1940 rather than live to see the Germans in control. *Trépanation pour*

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tumeur de la région hypophysaire (Trepanning for a tumour of pituitary region) and *Trépanation pour crise d'épileptic bravais-jacksonnienne* (Trepanning for Jacksonian epileptic crisis) were straightforward records in Kodachrome made by this distinguished surgeon, who at some points in the film operates with his left hand to enable the cameraman to secure a better angle. These films proved too strong for some of the audience, and one or two weaker members were carried out and had to be restored with suitable "administrations" of cognac. Medical films made up a large part of the programmes. They included Lutenbacher's (Versailles) *Troubles de conduction transmyocardique* (Affections of the conducting mechanism of the heart), a teaching film combining animated graphs and experimental work on a sheep's heart; surgical films from the U.S.A. (Colonel Harbaugh's *Bilateral Leg Amputations* and H. N. Harkins' *Surgery of Varicose Veins*); and the Soviet *Throat Wounds and their Treatment* by Trutnev, Zemtrov and Fédorov. Two anæsthesia films were presented, both Canadian, K. M. Heard's *Spinal Anesthesia with nupercaine*, a film with a marked advertising angle, and M. D. Leigh's *Pediatric Anesthesia* in colour. Nothing comparable for teaching value with the British *Technique of Anæsthesia Series* was shown at the Congress. Our own *Surgery in Chest Disease* was a considerable success and French surgeons were struck by the disciplined teamwork shown. Only two films dealing with the social aspects of medical work were given; *Sergeant's Diary*, a well-made but rather sentimental American film for building up the morale of soldiers who had undergone amputations, and Rotha's *Blood Transfusion*. This latter was greatly admired and Lo Duca, the film critic of "Cité-Soir", advised French shorts producers to meditate on the effective restraint of its commentary.

A record of the total eclipse of the sun on July 9th, 1945, made in Sweden by Leclerc and other French scientists, combined a pleasant account of the communal life of the astronomers of the two nations on the site, with speeded-up cinematography of the phenonomen itself. Amongst the biological films shown, Goodliffe's *Scabies Mite* was considered outstanding and *Life Cycle of Pin Mould* and *Life Cycle of Maize* were greeted as further examples of British photomicrography and styles of exposition. Guy-Busnel of Paris contributed an excellent film on the Colorado beetle, and the Italian film, *Flower Morphology*, by Professor Carano contained some good time-lapse sequences. But for me, the most fascinating of all these films were two studies of micro-organisms by the famous Doctor Comandon of the Pasteur Institute at Garches. Comandon, who has been using the cinema as a weapon of research since 1905, was unfortunately ill and his work was presented by a colleague, de Fonbrune. *La caryocinèse d'une cellule* (Karyokinesis) and *Etudes sur l'amibe et greffes de noyau d'amibe* (Studies on the grafting of an amoeba nucleus) showed with some exceptionally lovely photomicropgraphy experiments in cell division and illustrated the very fine instruments for handling micro-organisms in use at the Pasteur Institute. My own feelings about these brilliant examples of what film can do were summed up at the final session by the present Director-General of the French Cinema industry, M. Fourré-Cormeray, when he said, "Maybe in the end, the scientific film, made in a spirit of complete objectivity, comes near to the supreme manifestations of art itself".

We may feel a certain pride that it was left to British non-theatrical films to bring the importance of the social applications of science to the notice of the Congress. To illustrate a speech I made about the work being done over here with specialised agricultural and medical films, I showed *Potato Blight* and later answered questions on the work of the M.O.I. Films Division. What Denis Marion in the newspaper "Combat" called charmingly "la non-theatrical plan", was clearly a new use of the film for many of them. But it was left to *World of Plenty* to complete the impression of what one report called "British mastery" in this field. The presentation of a documentary which carries so strong a verbal as well as visual punch was something of a problem with such an audience. To meet this, I had the temerity to translate the commentary as the film was projected with the volume control suitably lowered. *World of Plenty* survived this hard treatment and its unexpected technique and the direct and human quality of its approach made a deep impression.

During my stay, I attended and spoke at a meeting of the Union Universitaire Française, a teachers' organisation largely created during the Resistance. The subject discussed was our new Education Act, and the interest displayed in it was characteristic of the vast and friendly curiosity among the French about educational and social developments over here. Documentary and scientific films can, and should play a major rôle in satisfying this curiosity. There should be traffic, too, in the other direction. Many of the French scientific films shown would be of great interest to Scientific Film Societies and research workers in this country. The time has come indeed when some international mechanism of distribution and liaison should be established in this field.

Cry from the Colonies

From a correspondent:—

Have you had a look at what Britain likes to call *British News?* Terrible! Badly edited and scamped through in general with a hundred foot sequence consisting of King, Windsor Castle, the Thames, English landscapes in general and a Union Jack leading into the title which is so slow that it aptly prepares one for the dreary slow nonsense that usually follows. You should sense the feeling of audiences out here when this atrocity appears. I understand that it is prepared and sent out by the British Council. Compared to the ordinary British newsreels and the American newsreels which are usually only a week behind the times instead of our three or four months, the *British News* derides and besmirches the flag.

Film News

Film News has appeared with a new format. It is still published by American Film Centre, but is now edited by Thomas Baird. It can be obtained from Film Centre. The subscription is ten shillings a year.

THE Screenwriters' Association is about to resume publication of its bulletins listing screen credits. In future the bulletin will appear every six months but the coming issue will contain details of all types of films issued between January 1st, 1943, and September 30th, 1945. All directors, writers and others are invited to submit particulars of their credits to Gordon Wellesly, 107 Latymer Court, W.6.

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technical unit
Associate Director: Francis Gysin. **Script Team:** Ara Calder Marshall, Miles Tomalin, Miles Malleson, Wolfgang Wilhelm. **Camera Team:** Harold Young, Peter Hennessy, Reg Wyer, Cyril Arapoff. **Charts and Diagrams:** Isotype Institute. **Supervision:** Peter Bradford. **Music:** William Alwyn.

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FILM REVIEWS

Star in the Sand. Merlin for M.O.I. With UNRRA, the Yugo-Slav Camp Committee and the Yugo-Slav Central Choir conducted by Joseph Hatze. *Story*: Arthur Calder Marshall. *Direction*: Gilbert Gunn. *Photography*: Cyril Bristow. *Editing*: Robert Kemplan and Patricia Murray. *Musical Score*: Ivor Walsworth. C.F.L. 20 mins.

Subject and Content: An UNRRA Camp Settlement in Egypt for Yugo-Slav refugees. A beautiful and at times deeply moving film has been made from what was admittedly superb story material. In January, 1944, 30,000 Yugo-Slavs, the young, the aged and the infirm, made the long journey from the Dalmatian Coast across the Mediterranean to the Sinai Desert. There, in a country of hot calm days and sudden blinding sand-storms, they were established in a group of UNRRA Camps. All arrangements were planned in a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation between UNRRA officials and Yugo-Slav Committee. Once the bulk supplies had been provided on behalf of UNRRA by the British Army, the task of creating a new community fell entirely on the Yugo-Slavs themselves. What followed was a magnificent tale of effort and achievement in the spirit of their slogans: "In work is salvation—in freedom, education". British veterans of Alamein taught them desert cooking and in the infertile desert they made little islands of green vegetation from soil improvised with wet tea-leaves and cinders. Their only materials for constructing amenities were the scraps and litter of the battle-fields, but their craftsmanship and ingenuity won through. Within a week schools were opened, using teachers' memories as texts and the desert sand as exercise books. Within a year an elaborate system embodying primary to higher education had been evolved; a medical service with special clinics for eye, ear and other ailments and a central hospital with a maternity ward had been created; from a duplicated sheet a daily paper had grown; wall newspapers carried stories, poems, drawings and facts from home; the practice of the arts of music, painting and folk dancing enlivened their exile.

The lyricism of music and camera gives this film a feeling of exceptional vitality. Ivor Walsworth's score and the sound track generally maintain a high quality. It is the best story yet to reach us of democratic rehabilitation. The commentary is sympathetic and finely spoken.

The Story of D.D.T. Directorate of Army Kinematography. C.F.L. 23 mins.

Subject and Content: The discovery, testing, large-scale production and the war-time uses of D.D.T. The film opens with an effectively brief parade, with some photomicrography, of the chief disease-bearing insects. The German, Seiler, is seen discovering dichlor-diphenyl-trichlor-ethane, unaware of its importance at a time when the role of insects as agents in the spread of epidemics was not understood. Research since then has produced many insecticides to help prevent epidemics and given us drugs as curatives. A uniformed M.O. explains how Japanese conquests deprived us of many sources of these preventatives and cures, but this was more than offset in one direction by the timely applications of Seiler's seventy-year old discovery. The patient and carefully controlled researches carried out in British laboratories and under field conditions are related by a suitably diffident academic voice. The second part of the film deals with the mass production of D.D.T. in various forms and its use in Naples, in the liberation of Western Europe and in South-East Asia.

The detail of experiment and trial—the gradual paralysis of the nervous system of the vectors (carriers), the R.A.M.C. men cheerfully eating, sleeping, living in the same impregnated shirts for a whole month, the aeroplanes spraying the D.D.T. and oil solution on English field and tropical bush with the same extraordinarily effective results—is all of it well done. The commentary is clear and unpretentious, but either through over-simplification or from false modesty, strangely underestimates the part played by the British in the control of the Naples typhus outbreak.

Audience Value: Excellent for the citizen-scientist. Within its limits, no film has conveyed in better or more simple terms the day-to-day aspects of modern research.

Your Children's Ears. Realist Film Unit for M.O.I. *Production*: John Taylor. *Direction*: Bert Pearl. C.F.L. 15 mins.

Content. The care of children's ears. A film for parents. The introduction arouses the interest by showing the difficulties involved in teaching deaf children—toddlers—to make sounds which are the beginnings of speech. The physiology of the ear is demonstrated by a well-conceived diagrammatic method; this is not pictorial, but a pleasing effect of roundness is provided by half-tone shading of the various parts as they are mentioned. The method of working is shown very effectively by the group of sound waves approaching the ear, and each succeeding group takes the hearing process one stage further into the ear until finally the message flashes to the brain. The third part of the film deals with the ear troubles which are avoidable or capable of being minimised by proper care, quite rightly omitting mention of irreparable damage to the inner ear.

Treatment: The film appears a little long, but the subject is developed by easy stages so as to make obvious the need for the proper treatment described both for general bodily health and for specific ear troubles.

Audience Value: The early part by itself would make an instructional film for children. Good use was made of "Teacher's licence" in that the first few groups of sound waves did not convey the message through to the brain, but stopped short for purposes of exposition. For children this licence would have to be explained by the teacher. In the latter part the wrong and right methods of ear treatment were dramatically treated and an appropriate recapitulation of these concluded the film.

Your Children's Teeth. Realist Film Unit for the M.O.I. *Production*: John Taylor. *Direction*: Jane Massey. C.F.L. 15 mins.

Content: The care of children's teeth. A film for parents. The care of a child's teeth begins with care for the general and dental health of the expectant mother, for, like the troubles of Tristam Shandy, those of the child's teeth begin before he is born. At successive stages the growth of the teeth is shown, with half-tone cut-away diagrams to explain their development, and suitable diet is mentioned. The structure of the tooth and the process of decay are made very clear in diagram, and shots of good and bad teeth emphasises the value of care. Methods of prevention of decay include cleaning the teeth of starchy foods by eating, for example, an apple, by using a tooth brush and by regular dental inspection. The film concludes with a valuable recapitulation of important points.

Audience Value: The film is suited only to its intended audience of parents and possible teachers; a different treatment would be required for a school teaching film, although many of the same shots could be used.

Unity is Strength. World-Wide for A.E.U. *Direction*: Ralph Bond. 33 mins.

Subject: The history and war effort of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

Treatment: A straightforward, part commentary, part dialogue film made to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the amalgamation of the various engineering unions. Made from a good script, it is well directed and photographed. It is as good a film of its kind as you will see and undoubtedly it will be very useful. But it does raise the old question again of why Labour organisations are so backward in their planning of films. Why should the Unions stick to conventional, even threadbare, themes and leave it to commercial sponsors to make all the films such as *The Harvest Shall Come* and *Words and Actions*?

It is time the Unions and the Co-ops. and the Labour Party stopped making self-congratulatory films and started proper planned programmes of films for definite purposes. We suppose that we should congratulate the A.E.U., anyway, for being the first Union to make a film. But we hope that in future they will make full use of the opportunities that are open to them and that their example will be followed by the rest of the Labour movement.

Audience Value: Very good, especially for non-theatrical.

The Burning Question. World Wide for M.O.I. and Ministry of Fuel and Power. With Gillie Potter. *Production*: Ralph Bond. *Direction*: Ken Hughes. *Photography*: Geoff. Williams. C.F.L. 11 mins.

This film carries a series of hints on the domestic aspects of fuel economy and shows how light, heating and power derive in the end from coal. It does this job well. But it also sets out to be a comic film, in which task it is hampered by the presence of a comedian who is essentially "A Voice". Mr. Gillie Potter is a considerable artist in radio. He is the Don who has strayed into the music hall. His humour is entirely verbal and evocative. On this occasion, his journey from Hogsmorton to the recording studios was not, one feels, really necessary.

Vredens Dag (The Day of Wrath). Palladium Films, 1943. *Script*: Mogens Skot-Hansen, Poul Knudsen and Carl Dreyer. *Direction*: Carl Dreyer. *Photography*: Carl Andersson. *Music*: Poul Schierbeck. *Principal Players*: Thorkild Roose, Lisbeth Movin, Sigrid Neijendam, Preben Lerdorff, Albert Hoeberg, O. Ussing, Anna Svierkier.

Those who saw Carl Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) usually place it with such classics of the silent screen as *Potemkin* and *Caligari*. His eight preceding films seem to have missed attention in Britain. Perhaps only one of them, *Du skal ære din Hustru* (*Thou Shalt Cherish Thy Wife*, 1925), reached here. It was released under the title of *The Master of the House*, and cropped up in a few cinemas in back streets. Anyone who saw it must have been struck by its sensitive handling of character, for Dreyer has always turned his brilliant powers of direction to the study of personal relationships.

After *Jeanne d'Arc* Dreyer made only one more film—his first talkie—before the outbreak of war. This was *Vampyr* (1933), recently shown by the London Film Institute Society in London. Most people find it the least successful of his films. After making it, he became a journalist until, to the great gain of cinema, he returned to direction in 1943. In that year, with the Germans occupying his country, he produced *Vredens Dag* for the Palladium Film Company. It was a box-office failure but, in my estimation, just as *Jeanne d'Arc* is now ranked as one of the masterpieces of the silent film, *Vredens Dag* will presently be hailed as one of the great sound film masterpieces.

Dreyer has taken for his theme the persecution of witches in the seventeenth century. One would have thought the affinity between the persecution of the witches and the persecution of the Jews would have stood out a mile, but the Germans did not notice anything. Like all Dreyer's work the film deals with complex and subtle relationships, this time between a saintly bishop, his mother, his young second wife and his son by his first wife. His second wife is also the daughter of someone supposed to have been a witch, and neither she nor the audience knows whether she has inherited the powers of her mother. Is it coincidence or witchcraft that her wishes come true? In a moment of despair she wishes her husband dead, for she has fallen in love with his son by his first wife. He is struck down on his way home from visiting a sick man. Is she responsible? She does not know. She is asked to declare that her husband has died a natural death. She cannot answer "Yes", and we are left supposing that she will meet the awful end of a witch whom she has seen persecuted and burnt alive—a brilliant and terrifying episode at the beginning of the film.

A bare account of the plot cannot possibly convey the subtlety of Dreyer's direction or the superlative qualities of the photography. Rarely will one see finer direction or finer playing than in the part of the tortured witch (Anna Svierkier); the bishop's young wife is played most subtly and seriously by Lisbeth Movin, who is otherwise well known in musical comedy. Every camera angle is perfectly adjusted both to character and mood. Camera movement, the dramatic use of white, and the masterly handling of the sound track prove Dreyer to be one of the greatest film directors alive to-day. In him, Denmark has a great contributor to European culture.

TWO INDIAN FILMS

Quite by chance these two films from India were projected together at a private view, and they show that two very definite trends are developing in Indian short film production. *Tree of Wealth* was made by the Government Film Unit, and *In Rural Maharashtra* by a commercial company (Prabhat Films) for the Government. The former was well made, nicely photographed and very thorough. *In Rural Maharashtra* was flung together, very uneven to look at and as haphazard as a film could be, And yet, of the two, there is no doubt that the latter is the more important from the point of view of the future of Indian short films. *The Tree of Wealth*, glossy and presentable as it undoubtedly is, represents a very dangerous trend in film making which is not peculiar to India alone. (It must be emphasised that both films were made by Indian film units and that the same European spoke both commentaries which, incidentally, sounded as though they had been written by the same person).

The Tree of Wealth tells about the coconut palm and the different things which it produces. It was shot on very lovely locations in Travancore and shows us the villagers at work collecting the nuts, extracting the oil, preparing the fibre for mats, plaiting the leaves for roofs and, in general, making use of the many products of this useful and good-looking tree. All this the film does very well; everything that is going on is interesting and is pleasantly shot, and the commentator gives just the amount of information we need to make us feel we are understanding the subject. And yet this film, made by Indians, in India, might just as well have been made by a Fitzpatrick, so detached is the handling of the subject.

Detachment, of course, has its place among all the many possible methods of approach to a film subject, but if it is going to be used, it should not be mixed with sentimentality. Goodness knows, there have been enough films made in Britain which have set out to prove that this or that industry is both quaint and important, without us wishing to see another country falling into the same error.

Now let us look at the second film, *In Rural Maharashtra*. This must, to the makers of the film, have seemed a very similar subject—village life in a part of India. The film is technically inferior to the other, but the people who made it were obviously enthusiastic and excited by the subject and what they found to film. So, of course, the result is entirely different; the film is exciting to look at and enlarges our knowledge of India. Enthusiasm carries us across the parts of the film which are superficial and through the dull patches of photography, and even makes unimportant some of the most disastrous trick wipes in the history of film making. Because we want to know what the next shot is going to be we forgive the many faults of film construction, and that is in itself one test of good film making. (The intensity of purpose has even affected the commentator, who, although still using such adjectives as "fascinating", does enter into the spirit of the film).

Integrity of purpose is perhaps the prime necessity of short film making. *The Tree of Wealth* has not got it and *In Rural Maharashtra* has. The latter is likely to be more difficult for an audience to accept but it will make an impression; the former will be enjoyed by everybody and remembered by none. The makers of both films would profit by seeing a film called *Eskimo Arts and Crafts* from the Canadian National Film Board. This film shows people doing things which are far more extraordinary to us than anything shown in the two Indian films and yet presents them so sensibly that we are not at all surprised and accept them as extremely reasonable things to do. It is to be hoped that films on similar subjects to the ones which the Information Board of India is tackling can be shown to the Indian technicians, not so that they shall imitate the method of their making, but so that they can study the manner of the approach.

These two films also demonstrate very clearly aspects of a problem which is obviously bothering Indian film makers very much, and it is one which will also be causing a lot of trouble to other countries when they start making their own short films. Roughly the problem is this. Suppose that you have a film industry which is not yet up to world-market standards, and that, on top of this, your films are made in a language which is not understood in countries other than your own. Suppose, further, you want to spread knowledge of your country abroad by means of short films and can get quite a considerable showing for them. Should you then import foreign technicians to make films which have the currently accepted technical gloss? Should you set your own technicians to work to imitate the films of other countries? Or should you take a long term view and hack out your own path? And in all the cases mentioned, what do you do about the commentary? To have it written and spoken by your own countrymen will preserve a flavour of the land in which the film is made but may be irritating for the foreign audiences for which it has been designed. To have the film presented by a European writer and speaker will mean it is almost bound to take a too detached view of the subject.

This is what the Informations Films of India unit is up against and, on the whole, it is tending to follow the course which results in a polished film bearing happy comparison with, say, an American short, but which does not quite succeed in developing fully the film medium as a means of natural expression. Until the problem of India's future is satisfactorily settled, it is true to say that they will not be able to make really good Indian films. The ones which they are sending out of India at the moment have an extra importance because of the present difficult political situation and it is worth while considering them seriously. Let us hope that while Information Films of India are making their present programme they are also training a large number of young technicians who will, when the time comes, be ready to form the nucleus of a truly National Film Board.

NEWS FROM EGYPT

From a Special Correspondent

OVER NINETY per cent of the population of Egypt exists on starvation wages, whilst there are possibly more millionaires in the country than in any other part of the world. The country is run theoretically on modern democratic lines, yet one only has to wander a short distance off the beaten track to find a social system that is feudal. What is more important in the present context, however, is the fact that the splendour and beauty of Islamic culture has been allowed to die and has been replaced by a bastardised version of Western civilisation, adopted at second-hand and which the Egyptian does not really understand. It is on a conspicuous lack of a culture of its own, and on a most hazy appreciation of Western culture that the film industry in Egypt has been built.

Egypt is still the only country in the Middle East which has its own film industry. Before 1925 all films shown in the Middle East were imported, but in that year the first local production was made by a group controlled by an enterprising woman called Aziza Amir. This early attempt was crude to a degree. Made by amateurs and without studio facilities, the film was nevertheless exceedingly popular on account of its handling of a local subject in a local setting. It was, however, a flash in the pan—the better quality of foreign films was obvious, and foreign agencies had the virtual monopoly of the circuits, which at that time were very small.

With the advent of the talkie the chances of success were greater, owing to the value of dialogue in the vernacular, and Talaat Harb Pasha, the managing director of the Banque Misr, who was at that time sponsoring many new enterprises in Egypt, became interested in the possibilities of building a studio on European lines, and attempting to establish a local film industry. In 1932–3 the Studios Misr were built, and German experts and technicians (with a few Italians) were imported to make films with Egyptian actors and Arabic dialogue. At the same time young and enthusiastic Egyptians were taken on as apprentices to study the ways of film-making. To begin with the venture met with little success, but gradually it established itself and, with the growth of the circuits, the popularity of home-made Arabic films increased. Technique improved too, and a few years before the war the foreign technicians drifted away (largely because of small pay) and their Egyptian pupils stepped in.

The industry has never been anything else but one hundred per cent commercial and, since the war, from the commercial point of view, it has never looked back. In a country that has as yet no modern local culture there are no modern standards of criticism. With technical improvements, with the insistence of foreign films on subjects dear to the heart of the war-time propagandists, but which are of little interest to a simple and disinterested audience, and with the spread of the circuits to almost every inhabited locality of respectable size in the Middle East, not to mention North Africa and parts of India, there is not one film made in Egypt since the war which has not brought in enormous profits. The audiences which provide the greater part of this income are not interested in ethical problems or social questions. They want merely enough crude sentiment and humour to appeal to their basic emotions, set in backgrounds familiar to them, with the guarantee of a song and a dance thrown in somewhere and somehow.

Films are made in the shortest possible time, in a way so casual that it would horrify anyone from a western studio. There are practically no closed doors or red silence lights; coffee and cigarettes are dispensed freely and frequently to any friends who may drop in for a gossip and to watch the progress of shooting. Taking these things into consideration, and remembering that there are hardly any re-takes owing to shortage of stock, the results are often surprisingly good. Further, it can now be said that there is growing up a small body of young intelligent directors who, although technically lacking in competence, are genuinely trying to find out what they can do and to build up an industry as definitely peculiar to Egypt as the French film is to France. They are aware that, in balance, rhythm and composition, they are as yet extremely unpractised, but they are eager for help and advice. With the lack of natural intellectual and aesthetic background improvement will, however, inevitably be a slow business. They are also handicapped by the fact that their efforts, with a few exceptions, remain unappreciated by discerning people within the major cities of Cairo and Alexandria. It is an indication of progress, however, that the director, who only two years ago was regarded by the producers as a technician and not as a creator, and who was paid an insignificant sum accordingly, today can command a considerable amount of money for making a picture.

From the point of view of the documentary film in Egypt, practically nothing has been done. The number of documentaries made in the country can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and they were made with no knowledge of the approach and methods required. The general public is not interested and regards short films of any nature, with the exception of colour cartoons, as just a waste of time. And yet there is great scope for documentary in the country. Since the war the Egyptian government has been genuinely impressed with the value of documentary and also instructional films. There have been articles in the Arab press urging the Government to start making such films for foreign showing, stressing the fact that the world is almost totally ignorant of modern Egypt and that this is a state of mind which should be remedied. Furthermore, considerable interest in Egypt is being shown today by North Africa and India. Both English-speaking documentaries for European and American consumption and Arabic-speaking ones for Middle Eastern consumption badly need developing. Unfortunately there appears to be no one in Egypt with the ability to start such a scheme.

British documentaries are being shown in the Middle East in increasing numbers and have done as much as anything to foster this interest, though they are rarely seen in the public cinemas. Such films are shown through the agencies of the British Council and to a lesser extent through the M.O.I. British Council films are shown all over the Middle East, often to highly specialised audiences. In general, they do not reach a wide enough section of the public, being seen mainly by those who attend the British Institutes established throughout the Middle East by the British Council and in certain clubs in the cities. Similarly British features hardly ever get so good a booking in the public theatres as do Hollywood productions and it is fairly exceptional to find a British feature running more than one week in Cairo. There seems to have been no attempt to get British documentaries shown regularly in the theatres at all.

SALESMANSHIP?

Films from Britain is issued by British Information Services in New York. It is a catalogue containing an impressive list of films which are available to the people of America on sub-standard. Unfortunately, although the films listed are a good selection, the catalogue itself is badly presented. The cover design is dull and would have been more suitable for a haulage contractor's pamphlet, the paper on which the catalogue is printed is of poor quality and the lay-out of the wording is irritating and makes the catalogue unattractive to read. Finally we would suggest that to put conditions of sale and loan before the list of films is not the best way in which to lure people on to read a catalogue. Surely H.M.G. can do better than this, especially in a country where the art of presenting such information has reached such a very high level. Of course there is a possibility that the catalogue was presented in such a shoddy way deliberately as an example of austere and rugged individualism.

SIGHT and SOUND

A cultural Quarterly

MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

appraising educational and entertainment values

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FILM SOCIETIES

The London Scientific Film Society has had great difficulty in finding suitable premises. The first performance will be given on Sunday, December 9th, at 2.45 at the Scala Theatre, Charlotte Street, W.1.

The Cape Town Film Society (Secretary: Mrs. G. K. Agnew, P.O. Box 3218, Cape Town) held its first performance on Wednesday, August 29th. The programme consisted of *Teeth of Steel*, *Behind the Screen* (Chaplin), *Night Mail* and *Prelude to War*. By the time the second performance was held towards the end of September, the Society was already turning members away because all available seating accommodation was booked. The objects of the Society are to further interest in the film as a social, artistic and historical medium, to further film appreciation, and to undertake any other related activities.

The Dundee Film Society (Secretary: G. A Kinnear, 3 King's Road, Dundee) opened its eleventh season on Sunday, October 14th. The programme consisted of *Song of Ceylon* and *Le Bonheur*.

The Northern Counties Children's Cinema Council opened its seventh series of "Films for Educationists" at the News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne on Saturday, October 13th. The programme was drawn mainly from the Central Film Library. Five further programmes in this series are planned. Another series, known as "Films for the Classroom", was launched on Friday, October 5th, with a programme of geography films. The secretary is Mr. F. R. Griffin, 138 Holystone Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne 7.

The Workers' Film Association ran a Film School at Cliftonville at the end of September. Speakers included Sidney Bernstein, Basil Dearden, Arthur Elton, Ernest Meyer, Geoffrey Bell, Mary Field, and Frank Sainsbury.

The Leicester City Libraries have arranged a "Programme of Film-Lectures" in the Southfields Library. Seven sessions are planned on "The Face of Britain", "Pacific War", "Other People's Jobs", "Spotlight on Education", "G.P.O.", "Canadian North" and "Building and Planning". Each programme will be accompanied by a speaker, and an excellent reading list has been issued.

The Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley Districts Film Society (Secretary: J. C. Fletcher, Hindles Cottage, Atherton) had its first performance on October 3rd. The principal film was *Spring Song*, "a Russian musical film free from all politics, history and propaganda". Other programmes will include *The Italian Straw Hat*, *The Blue Angel*, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Ghost Goes West*. On November 14th there will be a session billed as "The Amateurs' Contribution to Screen Art". Mr. G. H. Higginson will screen a programme of his own films. This seems a move other film societies might well follow.

The Scientific Film Association has started to issue a *Scientific Film Societies' News Letter* to its 20 member societies. It contains notes of new films and similar information. much of it of interest to all societies, since so many of the films listed are suitable for popular use.

The joint film catalogue activities of **The Scientific Film Association** and **The Royal Society of Medicine** have brought to light a good copy of Pukovkin's *The Mechanism of the Brain*, a study of Pavlov's theories. The film was produced in 1925 and shown at the R.S.M. and the Film Society. The copy then disappeared, and has only just been found in a miscellaneous collection of films forwarded for examination by the Physiological Institute of University College. The print has been handed to the National Film Library.

Copenhagen Filmkresen (Film Circle) had its first performance on Sunday, November 28th. Arthur Elton gave an address, and the programme consisted of *These Are the Men*, *Listen to Britain* and *World of Plenty*. Five more programmes are planned.

The New London Film Society which takes the place of the now defunct "London Film Institute Film Society", opens a "Festival of Great Films, 1895-1945" with a performance of the original version of *Birth of a Nation* (1915) at the Scala Theatre on Sunday, December 2nd, at 3 p.m. There will be twelve programmes in all, and many of the films will be drawn from the collection in *The Museum of Modern Art*, New York. The council consists of Rodney Acland, Anthony Asquith, Michael Balcon, Cavalcanti, Dilys Powell and Olwen Vaughan. Applications for membership should be made to Miss Olwen Vaughan, 4 St. James's Place, S.W.1.

BOOK REVIEW

Film and the Future, by Andrew Buchanan. (Allen & Unwin. 6*s*.)

Mr. Buchanan seeks to find out whether the film exerts the right or wrong kind of influence for the world today. Most people will join him in his quest with sympathy and interest, but they will also find his forced witticisms and personal references rather trying. The good intentions are there, and the desire to make good national films which are of real international value. But we could have done with less forced brightness. Finally, one quotation might give some idea of Mr. Buchanan's approach: "If the screen is our canvas, religion is the only power which can inspire us to paint upon it the type of films mankind is needing. Humanity is not asking for such films, because as a result of materialistic propaganda much of the world has become inarticulate, immunised against truth".

CORRESPONDENCE

A.SC.W. GRADED LIST

DEAR SIR,

When at last the long-heralded and eagerly anticipated flood of substandard film apparatus and supplies of educational films actually arrives, it will be essential that one or more disinterested bodies undertake an efficient catalogue of the films available. Up till now The British Film Institute has, from time to time, published a fairly comprehensive catalogue of scientific films; but the B.F.I. is not the most obviously suitable body to undertake this work, and in any case their catalogues do not attempt any assessment of merit, which is really a necessity for the ordinary catalogue user.

Now, the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers have published a "Graded List of Scientific Films" which claims to be "a comprehensive record of the best of such films". At first sight the A.Sc.W. would seem to be the ideal body to undertake this work and their system of grading seems very sensible —three classifications: General, Specialist and Teaching, and three grades: recommended, suitable, and not recommended.

But when the catalogue is examined in detail it is found to contain a host of inaccuracies—wrong titles, mis-spellings, inaccurate cross-references, etc. Moreover, there doesn't seem much point in listing films which are described as "withdrawn" or "not available", particularly when the same film may be described under one subject-heading as available and under another as withdrawn (e.g., *Five Faces*, available under "Anthropology", withdrawn under "Sociology".) As regards the gradings awarded in the catalogue, such things are, of course, very much a matter of personal opinion, but many of them do certainly appear on the face of it most extraordinary. For example, under "Sociology", *The City*, *The Face of Britain* and *A Child went Forth* are all graded higher than *Land without Bread* and *Housing Problems*, while *The Nose has it* is considered better "Light Relief" than *How to Sleep*.

What is more serious, however, is the whole host of films which find no mention in the catalogue at all. We must assume that they have been relegated to Grade 3, "not recommended for any audience type". To take one single heading only, "Agriculture and Horticulture", it would be interesting to hear the Committee's reasons for excluding from a list, which includes such films as *Pests of* 1938 (withdrawn) and *Cheese for Choice* (withdrawn), the following films from one source only:—

Kill that Rat
The Rabbit Pest
Ditching
Hedging
Food from Straw
A Way to Plough
Clamping Potatoes
Growing Good Potatoes
Clean Milk
Fuel and the Tractor
Welding Helps the Farmer
Cereal Seed Disinfection
Vegetable Seed Growing
Stooking and Stacking
Making Good Hay
Re-seeding for Better Grass
Potato Blight
Grass and Clover Seed Production
Flax
Storing Vegetables Indoors
Storing Vegetables Outdoors
More Eggs from Your Hens
Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat
Feeding Your Hens in Wartime
Garden Tools
Saving Your Own Seeds
Winter Work in the Garden
Simple Fruit Pruning
New Crop
Modern Pruning for Commercial Apple Orchards

All these films had been completed well before May, 1945, which is the date of this catalogue.

If the Committee considers none of these films suitable for inclusion, they are unfitted to do their work, and a list which omits such films is obviously not worth publication.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN SMITH

(*Continued at foot of col.* 2)

CATALOGUE OF M.O.I. FILMS MADE IN 1944

Published by Permission of the Ministry of Information.

ABBREVIATIONS

15-M: Fifteen minute film release
T: Mainly Theatrical Release
NT: Mainly Non-Theatrical Release
I: Instructional
CFL: Listed in Central Film Library Catalogue
W: Withdrawn
OO Mainly for Overseas use
OOO Wholly for Overseas use

Names of people in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	DISTRI-BUTION		PRODUCTION UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES T	RELEASE DATES NT	LENGTH	NOTES
Atlantic Trawler	CFL	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	—	10/44	1,960	
Back to Normal	CFL	15-M	Merlin	M. Hankinson	R. McDougall	10/44	1/45	1,358	
Bailey Bridge	CFL	OO	Merlin	M. Hankinson	A. Barnes	—	1/45	1,008	
By Sea and Land	CFL	15-M	Crown	J. Holmes	J. Lee	9/44	10/44	1,202	
Catholics in Britain		OOO	Verity	S. Box	H. Cass	—	—	1,415	Despatched Latin America 5/44
Checkmate!		OOO	Merton Park	F. A. Hoare	H. Purcell	—	—	1,663	Despatched Latin America 5/44
Children of the City	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	B. Cooper	—	6/44	2,853	
Chinese in Britain		OOO	Strand	D. Taylor	C. Heck	—	—	3,028	Despatched China, Autumn 1944. A version is being prepared for CFL
Chinese Mission to Britain		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	953	Despatched China 7/44
Cine Sports Magazine No. 13								1,020	Despatched 1/44
No. 14								977	Despatched 2/44
No. 15								950	Despatched 3/44
No. 16		OOO	G.B.S.S.	—	—	—	—	970	Despatched 4/44
No. 17								940	Despatched 5/44
No. 18								945	Despatched 6/44
No. 19								873	Despatched 7/44
No. 20								888	Despatched 8/44
A City Reborn	CFL	NT	Gryphon	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	—	2,048	Release date not yet fixed
Conquest of a Dry Land	CFL	NT	Information Films of India	Ezra Mir	—	—	1/45	827	Adapted by Sylvia Cummins
Conquest of a Germ	CFL	15-M	Gryphon	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	6/44	9/44	1,348	
Cornish Valley	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	9/44	1,500	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Cotswold Club	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	C. de Latour	—	4/44	1,064	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Crofters	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	9/44	2,118	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Date with a Tank	CFL	15-M	Army F.U.	—	—	8/44	9/44	1,291	
Doing Without		OOO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	1/44	1,214	
Duke of Gloucester		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	8/44	919	Newsreel Compilation
Eighty Days, The	CFL	NT	Crown	H. Jennings	—	—	1/45	1,266	
Farm is Reclaimed, A	CFL	I	Campbell Harper	—	A. Harper	—	1/45	1,331	
Flax	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	—	—	6/44	824	
Fuel for Battle	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	9/44	1,893	
Grass & Clover Seed Production	CFL	I	Strand	—	—	—	3/44	1,349	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Grassy Shires, The	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	4/44	1,397	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Great Circle	CFL	15-M	Shell	E. Anstey	N. Bell	7/44	10/44	1,194	
Harbour Goes to France	CFL	15-M	Admir. & Army F.U.	—	—	11/44	1/45	1,242	
Housing in Scotland	CFL	NT	Merlin	—	G. Gunn	—	1/45	1,296	
How to Bake	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	645	
How to Boil	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	750	
How to Cook Green Vegetables	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	771	
How to Fry	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	669	
How to Make Short Pastry	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	876	
Hundred Years Old, A		OOO	G.B.I.	—	Brian Salt	—	9/44	996	
Jig-Saw 2		OO	Verity	—	H. Cass	—	6/44	779	
Latin Americans in England		OOO	Paramount	—	—	—	—	954	Despatched overseas 4/44
Life Saving at Sea	CFL	I	Films in G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	11/44	3,402	
(Lili Marlene)	*See* The True Story of Lili Marlene								
Minefield		15-M	Army F.U.	—	—	4/44	5/44	1,308	
Naples in a Battlefield	CFL	15-M	R.A.F. F.U. & Army F.U.	—	—	2/44	5/44	1,218	
New Builders	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	K. Mander	—	11/44	1,914	
New Crop, The	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	K. Annakin	—	4/44	1,721	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
New Zealand	CFL	NT	Crown	—	—	—	3/44	1,323	Compilation ("Know the Commonwealth" Series No. 2)
Night Flight	CFL	NT	R.A.F. F.U.	—	—	—	10/44	2,042	
One Man, Two Jobs	CFL	NT	Movietone	G. Sanger	—	—	4/44	969	
Our Country		T	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Eldridge	—	—	3,996	Release 6/45
Outworking	CFL		Strand	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	10/44	1,138	
Patching and Darning	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	2/44	970	
Potato Blight	CFL	I	Realist	—	R. Hunter	—	3/44	1,473	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Rationing in Britain		OOO	World Wide	R. Bond	G. Cutts	—	—	973	Despatched overseas 6/44
Rescue Reconnaissance	CFL	I	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Tharp	—	6/44	3,090	
Ship Against Plane		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	992	Compilation. Desp. Overseas 11/44
Some Like it Rough	CFL	NT	Pub. Relationship	G. Wallace	R. Massingham	—	—	1,225	Release not yet fixed
South Africa	CFL	15-M	Crown	—	—	—	5/44	1,240	Compilation ("Know the Commonwealth" Series No. 1)
Soviet Village	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	—	—	—	10/44	843	Compilation
Start in Life, A	CFL	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	B. Smith	—	9/44	1,995	English version of a film originally designed for Latin America
Steam Utilisation	CFL	I	C.W.S.	—	G. Wynn	—	10/44	1,894	
Subject Discussed	CFL	NT	Gryphon	D. Taylor	C. de Latour	—	1/45	1,325	
Three Cadets	CFL		Green Park	R. Keene	K. Annakin	—	1/45	1,968	
Transatlantic Airport	CFL	15-M	Crown	A. Elton	M. Gordon	12/44	—	1,293	
True Story of Lili Marlene, The		T	Crown	(J. Holmes)	H. Jennings	8/44	—	2,683	
Two Fathers		T	Crown	Elton	A. Asquith	—	—	1,205	Release not yet fixed
V.1		OOO	Crown	H. A. Jennings	—	—	—	758	Despatched to U.S. 11/44
War on Wheels	CFL	I	World Wide	R. Bond	K. Hughes	—	7/44	1,348	
West Indies Calling		15-M	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	D. Alexander	1/44	—	1,306	
Western Approaches		T	Crown	I. Dalrymple	P. Jackson	11/44	—	7,529	In technicolor
Willing Hands	CFL	NT	World Wide	J. Carr	M. Frances	—	10/44	958	
Worker & Warfront No. 10							2/44	1,083	
No. 11							4/44	975	
No. 12	CFL	NT	—	—	—	—	9/44	969	A magazine, assembled by Films of Fact, from items produced by various units
No. 13							11/44	1,020	
No. 14							1/45	851	

2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Coals of Fire	Concanen	D. de Marney	Min. of Fuel and Power	13th Jan.	
Agag	Publicity Pictures	—	Min. of War Transport	20th Jan.	
The Conjurer	Merton Park	A. C. Hammond	Min. of Fuel and Power	3rd Feb.	
Proceed According to Plan	Crown	G. Bryant	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	17th Feb.	
Your Perishing Rubber	Crown	G. Bryant	Ministry of Supply	24th Feb.	
Kitchen Nuts	Crown	G. Bryant	Min. of Fuel and Power	9th March	
Pay as You Earn	Strand	R. McDougall	Treasury	16th March	
Write to the Forces	Army F.U.	—	War Office	23rd March	
Do Moths Make Good Mothers?	Publicity Pictures	—	Board of Trade	30th March	
Tim Marches Back	Film Traders	Hoellering	G.P.O.	6th April	
Butterfly Bomb	Verity	D. Birt	Ministry of Home Security	17th April	Re-issue
Cold Comfort	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Fuel and Power	20th April	Cartoon
Early April	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	27th April	
Domestic Workers	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Ministry of Labour	4th May	
Children's Vitamins	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Ministry of Food	8th May	
Compost Heaps	Halas Batchelor	—	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	11th May	Cartoon. Re-issue
From Rags to Stitches	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Supply	22nd May	Cartoon
It Makes You Think	Elwis	—	Fire Offices Committee	29th May	
A Tickets Dream	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	1st June	
Eat More Green Vegetables	—	—	Ministry of Food	4th June	Scotland only
Blitz on Bugs	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Agric. and Fisheries	8th June	Cartoon
Careless Talk	Strand	G. Gunn	Security Services	6th July	
Fifteen Bob	P. Rotha Prods.	—	National Savings Committee	10th July	England and Wales
Grain Harvest	Campbell Harper	—	Scottish Office	10th July	Scotland only
Bristles and Brushes	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	13th July	
Tom Johnstone's Appeal	Merton Park	E. C. Musk	Scottish Office	27th July	Scotland only
Little Drops of Water	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	10th August	
Diphtheria V	Strand	R. Macdougall	Ministry of Health	17th August	
Bones, Bones, Bones	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	24th August	
Blood Transfusion	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	7th Sept.	
Here We Go Gathering Spuds	Spectator	A. H. Luff	Dept. of Agric. for Scotland	11th Sept.	Re-issue for Scotland only
Harvest Uplift	Verity	W. McQuitty	Ministry of Agriculture	14th Sept.	England and Wales only
John Bull's Workers	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Labour	21st Sept.	
Come on, Girls	Merton Park	W. McQuitty	War Office	25th Sept.	
Books for the Brave	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Supply	28th Sept.	
Clear the Roads	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Supply	5th Oct.	
Burning Results	Strand	G. Gunn	Fire Offices Committee	9th Oct.	
You Can't Keep an Old Blade Down	Strand	R. Macdougall	Ministry of Supply	12th Oct.	
One Pair of Nostrils	Giles	—	Ministry of Health	19th Oct.	Cartoon
Tyre Economy	Film Traders	G. Hoellering	Ministry of Supply	26th Oct.	
Old Lags	Film Traders	G. Hoellering	Ministry of Health and Ministry of Fuel and Power	2nd Nov.	Re-issue
Mrs. Sew and Sew	H. Batchelor	—	Board of Trade	6th Nov.	Cartoon
Diphtheria VI	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	9th Nov.	
That's the Stuff to Give 'Em!	Crown	M. Gordon	Ministry of Supply	11th Nov.	
How to Use Your Doctor	Strand	P. Price	Ministry of Health	23rd Nov.	Re-issue
Christmas Wishes	H. Batchelor	—	G.P.O.	7th Dec.	Cartoon
Thank You, Housewives	Crown,	M. Gordon	Ministry of Supply	21st Dec.	

3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH 16 mm.	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	REMARKS
The British Empire at War No. 13	354 ft.	14/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 14	366 ft.	19/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 15	433 ft.	19/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 16	326 ft.	24/1/44	16 mm. Silent
Africa's Fighting Men	1,320 ft.	4/2/44	35 mm. Sound
West African Editors	911 ft.	4/2/44	35 mm. Sound
West African Editors (two reels)	882 ft.	17/2/44	16 mm. Silent
A British Family in Peace and War (four reels)	1,751 ft.	21/2/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 17	366 ft.	23/2/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 18	292 ft.	27/2/44	16 mm. Silent
Sam the Cyclist	225 ft.	10/3/44	16 mm. Silent
Cossack Horsemen	284 ft.	10/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 19	389 ft.	14/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 20	384 ft.	22/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 21	340 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 22	350 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 23	401 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 24	347 ft.	12/5/44	16 mm. Silent
Progress in the Colonies (Kenya)	350 ft.	7/6/44	16 mm. Silent (Kodachrome)
The British Empire at War No. 25	331 ft.	19/6/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 26	340 ft.	28/8/44	16 mm. Silent
Springtime in an English Village	272 ft.	28/9/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 27	371 ft.	7/10/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 28	410 ft.	14/10/44	16 mm. Silent
West Indians Join the R.A.F.	874 ft.	10/10/44	35 mm. Sound
Germans in Norway	593 ft.	20/10/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 29	368 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 30	440 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
Margarine (three reels)	1,114 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
West African Editors	373 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Your People in Britain	317 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Cossack Horsemen	284 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Land and Water	406 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Sam the Cyclist	239 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Africa's Fighting Men	532 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
The British Empire at War No. 30	509 ft.	15/12/44	16 mm. Silent

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Vol. V. INDICES (1944-1945)

Volume V contains nine issues, of which the first four were published in 1944. Unfortunately the page numbers of the fourth and fifth issues overlap, those of the fourth running from 41 to 52 inclusive, and those of the fifth from 49 to 60 inclusive. In the indices below, the repeated page numbers 49 to 52 are indicated thus †

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Northern Outpost	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Gerald Keen	—	4/41	—	650	With C.F.U. collaboration
Lofoten Islands	5-M	—	—	6/41	—	700	With C.F.U. collaboration
A.T.S.	5-M	Hugh Stewart	R. Verrall	7/41	—	700	
Special Despatch	5-M	Hugh Stewart	R. Carrick	11/41	—	868	
The Army lays the Rails	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Gerald Keen	R. Verrall	12/41	Hans May	798	
Tobruk		A. Bryce (Producer)	R. Verrall	3/42	Richard Addinsell	1,500	Compilation
The Right Man	5-M	A. Bryce	F. Clare	6/42	—	707	
Troopship	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Hugh Stewart	A. Best	7/42	Richard Addinsell	680	
Street Fighting		Hugh Stewart, Gerald Keen	F. Clarke	7/42	—	1,204	N.T. Release
Dover Revisited	5-M	Harry Watt	R. Verrall	8/42	—	720	
Tank Battle		Gerald Keen	R. Carrick	10/42	—	1,501	N.T. Release
Via Persia	5-M	Roy Boulting (Producer)	F. Clarke	10/42	—	740	Compilation
Malta G.C.		John Monk (Producer)	A. Best	10/42	A. Bax	1,832	With CFU & RAFFU collaboration
They Serve Abroad	5-M	Roy Boulting	J. Durst	12/42	—	700	
Desert Victory		David Macdonald, Roy Boulting	A. Best, F. Clarke, etc.	3/43	W. Alwyn	5,462	Compilation
A.R.C.A.	15-M	Gerald Keen	F. Clarke	7/43	W. Alwyn	1,354	
Tunisian Victory		Hugh Stewart, Frank Capra, Roy Boulting	—	7/43	W. Alwyn, etc.	7,400	With US APS collaboration
Man Wounded		Donald Bull	R. Carrick	12/43	—	1,668	N.T. Release
Naples is a Battlefield	15-M	—	P. Bayliss and R. Verrall	2/44	—	1,283	With RAFFU collaboration
Minefield!	15-M	Roy Boulting (Producer)	J. Durst	3/44	—	1,312	
Eve of Battle		David Macdonald	Starling and R. Verrall	6/44	—	1,553	With US APS collaboration
A Date with a Tank	15-M	Donald Bull	R. Carrick	7/44	—	1,325	
R.E.M.E.		—	R. Verrall	8/44	—	680	Compilation
Left of the Line		David Macdonald	A. Best and J. Durst	10/44	Dr. Clifford	2,365	Compilation
Harbour Goes to France	15-M	David Macdonald	R. Lloyd and A. Best	11/44	C. Danton	1,237	With RNFU Collaboration
The True Glory		Carrol Reed and Garson Kanin	R. Verrall, etc.	8/45	W. Alwyn	7,500	With US and other F Units
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I.C.I. *Film Productions*

Imperial Chemical Industries are engaged in the production of films as visual aids in scientific education.

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(Available to approved medical audiences only)

From the HEALTH OF DAIRY CATTLE SERIES:

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Contagious Abortion
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From the SCHOOL SCIENCE SERIES:

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THIS IS COLOUR
(A Technicolor film about the British Dyestuffs industry and the nature and use of colour)

THE HARVEST SHALL COME
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With the exception of This is Colour (in 16 mm. only) these films are in 35 mm. and 16 mm. sizes. All are Sound films.

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D.N.L. VOL. VI. INDICES

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